



**Presentation to the  
New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC)  
October, 2007**

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I am here today to represent the New Mexico Association for the Gifted (NMAG), and we would like to request legislation to establish a gifted education teacher requirement. Currently, there are over 17,000 students in the state of New Mexico identified as gifted. These students deserve to be served by teachers who are highly qualified in the area of gifted education. We have tried to work with the Public Education Department to accomplish this goal to no avail. Veronica Garcia even wrote me a letter indicating that such a requirement would not be considered at this time because of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). However, NMAG feels that because of NCLB there should be such a requirement.

I understand that the LESC is focusing on accountability. We believe this issue has a direct impact on accountability and the ability for teachers to provide high quality instruction to all students. Much of the current attention is focused on struggling students who are not proficient according to the New Mexico Standards Based Assessments (NMSBA). This leaves higher achieving and gifted students "patiently waiting for peers to learn skills and concepts that they had mastered one or two years earlier" (Davis & Rimm, 2004, p. 1). Are these students to wait until the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets reach higher levels to receive the instructional attention they deserve? Or, will teachers focus on providing differentiated instruction in order to meet the needs of all students? "Differentiated instruction personifies great teaching and what many great teachers aspire to do" (Kingore, 2004, p. 4).

The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) was awarded a three-year Javits grant, which ended June 30, 2007. However, the grant provided funding for teacher preparation, alternative identification method training, and three summer gifted institute. Participants in the teacher preparation component anticipate a gifted education teacher requirement and strongly advocate the benefits of the coursework in providing higher quality educational experiences not only to students who are gifted, but all students. Gifted courses are available throughout the state as follows:

Eastern New Mexico University (available either through ITV or online)

- SPED 509: *Theory to Practice.*
- ELED 540: *Creativity across the Curriculum.*
- SPED 593: *Special Topics – Consultation/Collaboration/Communication/ Counseling with the Gifted.*
- SPED 593: *Special Topics – Curriculum and Gifted.*

New Mexico Highlands University – Farmington (all available online)

- SPED 501: *Nature and Needs of the Gifted.*
- SPED 365: *Strategies for Gifted Students.*
- Course number not yet assigned: *Curriculum for Gifted Students.*
- Course number not yet assigned: *Twice Exceptional Gifted Students.*

New Mexico State University (all available online)

- SPED 501: *Nature and Needs of Gifted Learners.*
- SPED 502: *Curriculum for Gifted Learners.*
- SPED 503: *Twice Exceptional and Special Populations of Gifted Learners.*
- SPED 489: *Strategies for Gifted Learners.*

In addition to these courses, SPED 495 has been offered for one graduate credit hour for participants of each of the Summer Gifted Institutes and for one or two graduate credit hours for participants of the Frasier Talent Assessment Profile (FTAP) Training.

University of New Mexico (available face-to-face only)

- Spc Ed 470/570: *Introduction to Gifted Education*.
- Spc Ed 574: *Teaching Twice-Exceptional Learners*.
- Spc Ed 576: *Instructional Strategies for Gifted Students*.
- Spc Ed 577: *Curriculum for Gifted Students*.

Western New Mexico University – Gallup (available face-to-face only)

- SPED 580: *Special Topics - Nature and Needs of Gifted Learners*.
- SPED 580: *Special Topics – Curriculum and Methods for Gifted Learners*.
- SPED 580: *Special Topics – Strategies for Differentiation for Gifted and High Ability Learners*.
- SPED 580: *Special Topics – Special Populations of Gifted and High Ability Learners*.

At NMSU, the gifted education courses are all online and have been created to be aligned with the proposed competencies for New Mexico Gifted Education Teachers as well as the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Gifted Education Graduate Program Standards, which have been approved by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

NMAG proposes that teachers of gifted learners (case managers and/or gifted service facilitators) be highly qualified. Teachers of gifted learners would be able to demonstrate that they are highly qualified in one of the following ways:

1. Provide documentation (official transcripts) of 12 graduate credit hours in gifted education. This may include a Master's Degree with a minor, specialty, or focus in gifted education as defined by a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours in gifted education or an Endorsement in Gifted Education with a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours in gifted education.
2. Pass a state approved Gifted Education exam.
3. Demonstrate the competencies for gifted education teachers through a portfolio process reviewed by two individuals who already meet the criteria of highly qualified for gifted education. This process would be available for teachers with three or more years of experience in gifted education.

NMAG would like to propose that by the 2011-2012 school year districts would be required to hire only highly qualified teachers for gifted learners and by the 2013-2014 school year all teachers for gifted learners would be highly qualified.

If you have any questions or comments about this information or if you would like any additional information, please contact Teresa Rowlison at [rowlison@nmsu.edu](mailto:rowlison@nmsu.edu) or (505) 646-2125.

#### References

- Davis, G. A. & Rimm, S. B. (2004). *Education of the gifted and talented* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Kingore, B. (2004). *Differentiation: Simplified, realistic, and effective*. Austin, TX: Professional Associates Publishing.